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Message Text

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ACTION OES-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 EA-09 IO-13 ISO-00 FEA-01 PA-02 PRS-01
AID-05 CEA-01 CIAE-00 CIEP-02 COME-00 DODE-00 EB-07
FPC-01 H-02 INR-07 INT-05 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 OMB-01
PM-04 USIA-15 SP-02 SS-15 STR-04 TRSE-00 ACDA-10
NRC-07 /141 W
---------- 069743 /60
R 201706Z DEC 76
FM AMEMBASSY LONDON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8933
ERDA HQ WASHDC
ERDA HQ GERMANTOWN
INFO USMISSION EC BRUSSELS
USMISSION IAEA VIENNA
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY TOKYO

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E.O.11652: N/A

SUBJECT: PRESS REPORTS ON NEW U.S. POLICY ON NUCLEAR
FUEL REPROCESSING

REF: LONDON 19605

1. THE TIMES OF DEC. 18 CARRIED FRONT PAGE ARTICLE BY "SCIENCE EDITOR" STATING THAT A NEW ERDA-NRC POLICY MAY REQUIRE ALL SPENT NUCLEAR FUEL OF U.S. ORIGIN TO BE RETURNED TO U.S. BEFORE NEW CONSIGNMENTS ARE DELIVERED. THIS REPORTED CHANGE OF U.S. POLICY IS SEEN AS THREATENING A 500 MILLION POUND UK CONTRACT TO REPROCESS NUCLEAR FUEL FROM JAPAN. FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF KEY PORTIONS OF ARTICLE.

"PLANS FOR A CONTRACT WORTH 500 MILLION POUNDS TO
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BRITAIN FOR REPROCESSING SPENT NUCLEAR FUEL FROM JAPAN COULD DEPEND ON A DECISION TO BE TAKEN IN THE UNITED STATES.

"THE AMERICANS ARE RAISING THE ISSUE OF WHO OWNS THE PLUTONIUM AND HOW REPROCESSING OTHER PEOPLE'S REACTOR WASTE CAN BE RECONCILED WITH THE NUCLEAR NON-PROLIFERA-

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TION TREATY.

"DISCUSSIONS IN WASHINGTON BETWEEN THE AMERICAN ENERGY RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION AND THE NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION ARE COMING TO THE CONCLUSION THAT ALL NUCLEAR FUEL MUST BE RETURNED TO THE UNITED STATES BEFORE NEW CONSIGNMENTS ARE DELIVERED TO FOREIGN CUSTOMERS.

"THAT HAS CLEAR IMPLICATIONS FOR BRITISH NUCLEAR FUELS, WHOSE PLANNED CONTRACT WITH THE JAPANESE IS TO REPROCESS FUEL WHICH MOSTLY ORIGINATES IN THE U.S.

"A CONSIGNMENT OF SEVEN TONS OF SPENT FUEL, SCHEDULED TO ARRIVE FROM JAPAN ON DEC. 26 FOR REPROCESSING AT WINDSCALE, IS ALREADY A MONTH LATE. THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT HALTED THE SHIPMENT, BUT AFTER NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN THE JAPANESE NUCLEAR POWER CORPORATION AND THE UNITED STATES ENERGY RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION PERMISSION WAS GIVEN FOR THAT ONE SHIPMENT.

"ANY FUTURE SHIPMENTS, AND THE 500 MILLION POUND CONTRACT, DEPEND ON THE OUTCOME OF THE WASHINGTON NEGOTIATIONS.

"A JAPANESE INDUSTRIALIST SAID IN LONDON THAT THE AMERICAN ACTION HAD COME AS A SURPRISE. UNDER THE PREVIOUS POLICY THE NUCLEAR POWER COMPANIES SUPPLYING REACTORS AND FUEL WERE REQUIRED ONLY TO SUBMIT PERIODIC REPORTS ON THEIR ACTIVITY.

"UNDER THE NEW POLICY THEY HAD TO OBTAIN PERMISSION TO UNDERTAKE ANY DEVELOPMENT INVOLVING UNITED STATES TECHNOLOGY AND MATERIALS."

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